



**P.O. Box 2207 206 South Main Street Greenville SC 29602**

## **NEWS UPDATE**

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### **State Engineer Confirms Polycraft's Imminent Collapse Poses Threat to Main Street Buildings; City Says It's Critical that Property Owners Allow Engineer to Release Opinions**

**Tuesday, August 26, 2003**

State Engineer Michael M. Thomas confirms that the impending failure of the Polycraft building poses an imminent danger to the adjacent Mitchell and Surratt buildings. On August 14 the State Engineer's representative reviewed the demolition plans for the Polycraft building and made a site visit to the property location. Today, Building Code Administrator Steve Landrith received a report from the State Engineer in which he noted that the Polycraft building was in a state of active collapse and it was highly probable that "the collapse of the shared wall will cause collapse, partial or total, of the walls of the Main Street buildings."

The report comes at the heels of Friday's opinion given by independent structural engineer Tad Boland that the structural deficiencies of Surratt and Mitchell buildings combined with the continuing collapse of the Polycraft building make any demolition attempts dangerous -- even with bracing and shoring present.

Based on the assessments of the professional engineers, Building Code Administrator Steve Landrith must determine if the risk of an uncontrolled collapse of the Polycraft Building is a greater threat to the Mitchell and Surratt buildings and to the public than a timely demolition of the Polycraft Building without shoring. Additionally, he has advised that a final determination of the most efficient and least dangerous course of action for the demolition of the Polycraft building cannot be delayed.

To date, Mr. Mitchell continues to assert that his building is safe and in good condition, but he has not shared the names or reports of the engineers he claims have provided professional assessments. At the same time, Mrs. Surratt has not authorized her

structural engineer Jackson Zorn to allow the City access to his reports or information on the buildings' present condition -- information that could be critical in determining the optimum demolition plan.

In a final attempt to obtain this information, the Building Code Administrator Steve Landrith has taken the following actions:

- Sent a letter to Mrs. Surratt requesting that she allow her engineer Jackson Zorn to share his professional opinions and any pertinent information regarding the structural integrity of the Surratt and Mitchell buildings. Additionally, Mr. Landrith asked that a copy of the letter submitted to Mrs. Surratt by Mr. Zorn be released to the City and to Mr. Mitchell.
- Sent a letter to Mr. Mitchell asking that he provide the City with the names of the three structural engineers that he says have examined the South Main Street buildings and found them to be in good repair and sound condition. Mr. Landrith requested a copy of any reports submitted to Mr. Mitchell by these engineers.
- Sent a letter to Mr. Jackson Zorn requesting that he make official comments on the demolition plan and submit any pertinent information regarding the structural condition of the South Main Street buildings. Additionally, Mr. Landrith informed Mr. Zorn that the City has requested Mrs. Surratt to give her consent to release his findings on the South Main Street properties.

Attachments:

Zorn's letter to the City of Greenville refusing the City's request for his professional comments on the condition of the Mitchell and Surratt properties.

The report submitted by State Engineer Michael Thomas, P.E., C.B.O

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